

BATTLE BEFORE DAWN By Robert M. Williams

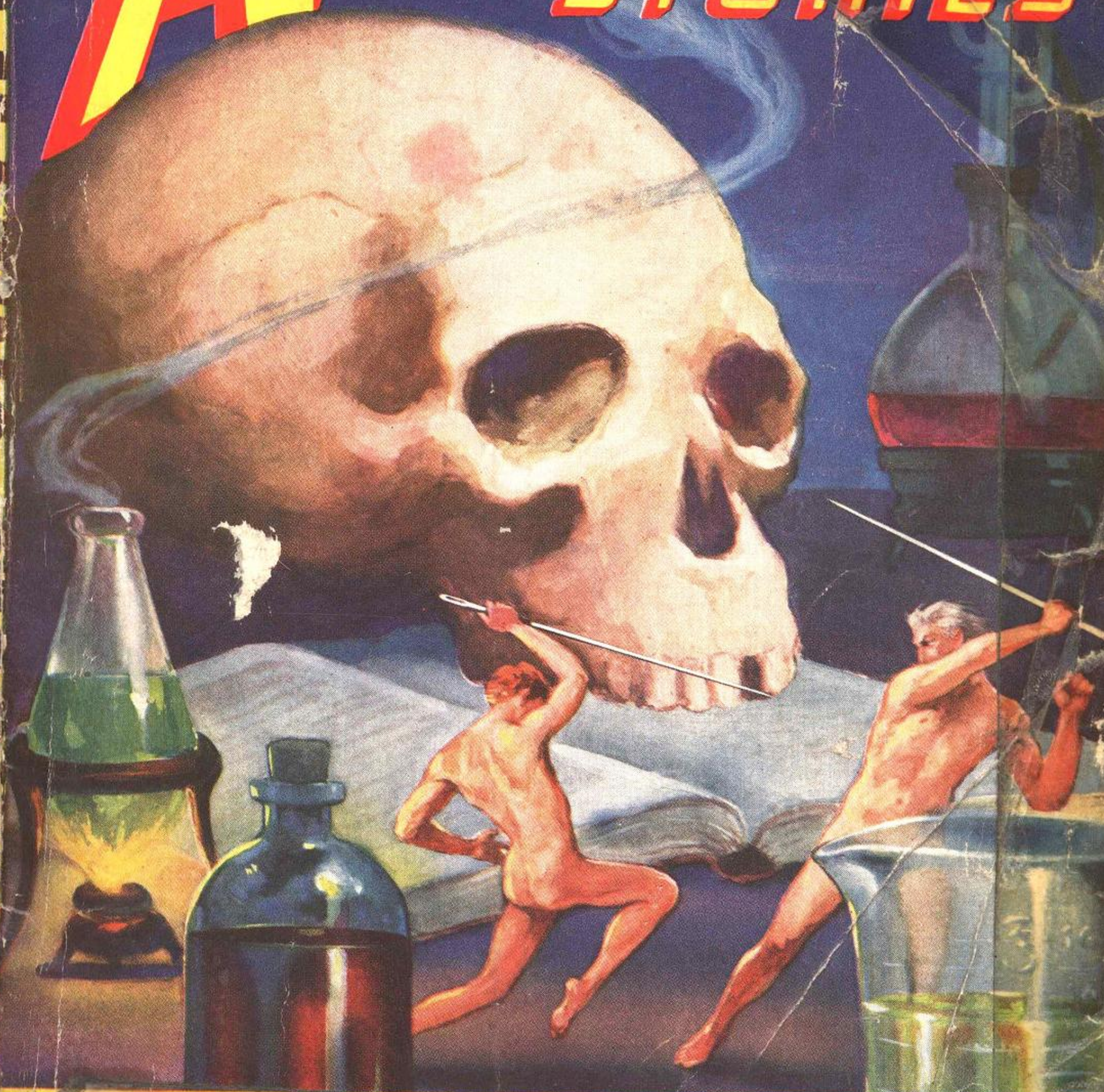
See BACK COVER

AMAZING

MARCH 25c

STORIES

AMAZING STORIES



IT'S A SMALL WORLD By ROBERT BLOCH

VOLUME 18
NUMBER 2

MARCH
1944

CONTENTS
PAGE

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1944

AMAZING STORIES

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» STORIES «

- THE SUPERMAN—\$2,000 CONTEST STORY...by Capt. Meyer Friedenson.... 12
- IT'S A SMALL WORLD (Novelet).....by Robert Bloch..... 16
There were dreadful juggernauts of death and destruction beneath this gaily decorated Christmas tree!
- MAGNETIC MISS METEOR (Novelet).....by Don Wilcox..... 50
A colony of duped Earthmen fought weird meteors and the lovely woman who was able to control them.
- CROSSED WIRES (Novelet).....by Leroy Yerxa..... 80
Blindness is a blessing compared to the thing that happened to Walter Marsh's most vital senses...
- BATTLE BEFORE DAWN (Short).....by Pvt. Robert Moore Williams 104
The whole of man's future civilization, even his existence, depended on this battle in pre-history.
- THOMPSON'S TIME TRAVELING THEORY
(Short-short).....by Sgt. Mort Weisinger.....118
Thompson had a theory about killing his grandfather before his own birth—so he went into the past.
- JOURNEY IN TIME TO CLEOPATRA
(Novelet).....by Helmar Lewis.....124
Time and tide—and an Indianapolis racer—await no man; not even Marc Antony. But Cleopatra... ah!
- SPAWN OF JUPITER (Novelet).....by Ed Earl Repp.....150
They risked their lives to enter this lost Jovian city—then learned it meant death to try to escape!
- COKIE GOES TREASURE HUNTING (Short)...by Berkeley Livingston.....172
Because a screwball scientist marked an X on the Loop sidewalk, Cokie found himself facing dinosaurs!

» FEATURES «

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|
| The Observatory..... | 6 | Amazing Oddities..... | 148 |
| Japs Hunt Quinine Substitute..... | 49 | Meet The Authors..... | 184 |
| An Untouched Source Of Rubber..... | 49 | Philatelic "Treasure"..... | 185 |
| Home Made Submarines..... | 79 | Scientific Mysteries..... | 186 |
| Vignettes Of Famous Scientists..... | 102 | Discussions..... | 189 |
| Amazing Facts..... | 116 | Ship Of Callisto..... | 208 |

Front cover painting by J. Allen St. John illustrating a scene from "It's A Small World"

Back cover painting by James B. Settles depicting the "Ship Of Callisto"

Illustrations by J. Allen St. John; Virgil Finlay; Hadden; Malcolm Smith; Magarian; Robert Fuqua

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Volume 18
Number 2

The OBSERVATORY

by THE Editor

ON page 12 of this issue you will find the results of our amazingly popular Hitler Illustration Contest conducted in the November, 1943 issue. And on page 14, you will find the winning story. We are proud to announce the name of the winner, Captain Meyer Friedenson, of the Medical Corps of the United States Army. For writing the best short-short story of approximately 1000 words, Captain Friedenson has won the *double* award of a \$2000 war bond. Our congratulations to him—he had staggering competition!

YOUR editors were a little bit dazed when faced with the prospect of reading so many stories, but as we read on, our interest in the responses to our contest, and in the people who competed for the big prize, grew so intense that we lost all perspective of the job as a task, but rather, saw it as a privilege!

TO our utter amazement more than half the contestants were women! All of which tends to prove that science fiction and fantasy is a field of literature that finds a ready market in the female of the species for one very definite reason—the girls have vivid imaginations, and a very excellently developed fantasy “sense.”

WE received a great many entries from soldiers, sailors, marines, even the Seabees. Many of them came from officers. One came from a holder of the Purple Heart, out of the fighting now because of wounds. Another came from a vet in a 1918 war soldier's home. Some even came from children now acting as heads of families in the absence of a fighting daddy.

AS we read, we became conscious of a fact that seems to us to be of prime importance in judging the war and the peace to follow in relation to the opinion of the general public. We learned a great deal about what the American thinks of the war and the peace, and what must be done to bring the first to a conclusion and the latter to permanence. First of all, we found that Hitler is the most hated man in the world, if not in history; and we shudder to think of what his

lot would be if these story writers could be judges of his fate! A hundred different tortures were devised, a hundred different ways to make him suffer in some small measure for the pain and sorrow he has caused.

AS for themes, there were five that predominated. 1. Hitler kidnaped by the Martians. 2. The devil coming to take Hitler to hell. 3. The laboratory monster created to be a secret weapon turning on its creator. 4. The god of war taking Hitler on a tour of time to view the failures of past war-makers. 5. Hitler as a reincarnation of previous war-makers, such as Ghengis Khan, Napoleon, Attila, etc. In spite of the terrific competition, many of the stories developed these themes amazingly in so far as originality is concerned.

NEVER, in the more than eighteen years of AMAZING STORIES' existence has a contest proved so popular and been so well entered. Never has a contest developed the interest and spirit of competition that this one has. When we selected a “hitler” subject for our illustration, we hoped to make the contest a tough one. We did that, the readers said, but it didn't stop them. They wrote stories, and how! We must give our readers credit for ability—and for plenty of imagination, ingenuity, and constructiveness.

FOR those contestants who inquired, in spite of the rules published with the contest illustration, we are unable to enter into any correspondence regarding it; and also, no manuscripts will be returned. It may be that we will publish other stories from among these from time to time, and these will be paid for at our usual rates.

LAST week Nelson S. Bond dropped in on us for a visit with the Coffee Club. He revealed that he was in town to do a radio program over a national hookup. He has written and sold several fantasy novels to the slicks. When he had finished his recital, we were rather proud of the man who made Lancelot Biggs, Horsensense Hank, and others beloved characters in our pages. We remember his many novels in our pages. They
(Continued on page 8)

\$2000 WAR BOND



Contest Illustration

AMAZING STORIES is pleased to announce the winner of the Hitler Illustration Contest presented in the November, 1943, issue.

Given the illustration reproduced here, contestants were to write a short-story of approximately 1,000 words about it. It was to be a story of Hitler seated in a plane or spaceship beside an unhuman-looking being.

As a grand prize for the best story written around this illustration, AMAZING STORIES offered \$1,000 in maturity value war bonds, with the stipulation that the prize would be doubled if the winner was a member of any branch of the armed forces. The final tabulation of the

contest by the judges revealed the winner to be a captain in the medical corps of the United States Army! Therefore, AMAZING STORIES is proud to present a \$2,000 war bond and extend its hearty congratulations to:

CAPTAIN MEYER FRIEDENSON, M.C., U.S.A.
(HOME ADDRESS) 711 WALTON AVENUE
BRONX, NEW YORK

A United States series E War Bond for \$2,000 (maturity value) has been sent to Captain Friedenson.

The winning story was selected from among ten finalists. Honorable mention goes to the following nine contestants (listed alphabetically, not in the order of excellence).

ARTHUR BERKOWITZ,

EANDO BINDER,

MRS. IONE BLOODSWORTH,

CPL. WILLIAM J. EVANS,

MISS NELL G. FAHRION,

1ST. LT. MARTIN E. KOSKELA,

CLAYRE STRZELECKI LIPMAN,

MICHEL LIPMAN,

JOHN FIELD MULHOLLAND,

Rt. 1, Box 534-D, La Canada, California.

136 Tenaflly Road, Englewood, New Jersey.

9766 Rosensteel Ave., Forest Glen, R. F. D., Silver Spring, Md.

Det. Med. Dept., U. S. Army.

747 Pennsylvania Street, Denver 3, Colorado.

Coast Artillery Corps, U. S. Army.

220 Sausalito Blvd., Sausalito, California.

220 Sausalito Blvd., Sausalito, California.

Round Lake, Minnesota.

CONTEST WINNER

I WAS born in Polotsk, Russia, scene of much current war activity, on May 15, 1905, and was brought to this country at the age of 18 months.

I lived in New York City until the age of 14, attending the public schools there. My family then moved to Connecticut, first to Ansonia and then to New Haven.

I entered Yale University in 1920 at the age of 15 and received my B. S. degree in 1924, and my M. D. in 1927.

I interned a year in Wilmington, Delaware, and another year in New York City, and commenced practice in 1929 in New York, which has been my home ever since.

I am a member of numerous medical societies, am certified as a specialist in internal medicine and cardiology. I have had several hospital appointments and am cardiologist for the New York City Health Department.

I have published numerous medical articles in a number of scientific journals, but have hitherto never submit-



Captain Meyer Friedenson, M.C., U.S.A.

ted any item of fiction.

I have been married for 15 years, have a daughter aged 13, who has literary ambitions, and a son aged 8, who aspires to the practice of medicine.

I have been reading your magazine intermittently for the past 15 years.—
M. Friedenson, Capt. M. C.

CAPTAIN FRIEDENSON'S prize-winning story is presented on the following pages (folios 14 and 15) almost exactly as he wrote it, with the exception of minor editing such as all manuscripts receive before publication. The editors express the opinion that Captain Friedenson, whose experience along fiction lines, he reveals, has been initiated by this first story, did a mighty swell job of explaining the story significance behind our contest illustration. His story answered several basic demands which all good fiction must have, and at the same time, made several unique emotional appeals which apply directly to the modern world situation. His story is truly escapist material, both in the imaginative sense, and in the emotional sense. Perhaps no more delicate and complete punishment could be devised for the man the whole world hates! Turn the page and read. . . .

THE SUPERMAN

By CAPTAIN MEYER FRIEDENSON

(Winner in Amazing Stories' Hitler Illustration Contest. See page 12.)

WELL, Mephitis—or Adolf Hitler, to keep the record straight—you've failed again! Back to Mars you go . . ."

"Wait! Wait! Please! Give me just a little more time! After all, it isn't over yet. I have had only a temporary setback. I'll get started again and then I'll certainly make it. Please give me only one more chance."

"No, we can't do it! We've given you 1,500 years already. Isn't that enough? You've delayed our plans by centuries. All the other planets of the solar system have been overcome and are completely under our control. Your mission was to subjugate Earth, the only unconquered planet, and you didn't do it."

"When you were defeated as Attila at Chalons in 451, all we got was excuses. 'You were betrayed—the weather had unexpectedly turned against you—you didn't have adequate weapons!' You said, 'Just wait until next time!'"

"So we waited 750 years until Genghis Khan—and what happened? Again failure! True, you conquered China, then most of Asia, swept westward to the Danube. You were ruthless, merciless. Remember your pyramid of skulls? But finally you weakened and once more you failed! And again what did we get? Excuses—just excuses!"

"We gave you another 600 years and Napoleon. In him you fought and killed and conquered your way all across Europe, but you just didn't have it in you. Remember the retreat from Moscow? Then 1815 and Waterloo?"

"Our patience had by that time be-

come exhausted! But you begged and whined and pleaded until, in spite of our better judgment, we consented to give you another century or so.

"But now you've had your final chance, Mephitis, my friend! You made a good beginning in rearming the Rhineland and taking Czechoslovakia. You seemed at your best in Poland, Luxembourg, Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Norway (bettering that Earth upstart, Hohenzollern). When your planes attacked England, we thought that you were finally on the road to success. You did have the English on their knees, but you didn't finish them. Then again you misjudged the Russians! For the final time, Mephitis, you've failed. You must be liquidated. We've no use for failures."

"But it isn't over yet! They double-crossed me, those damned Russians! In spite of our mutual non-aggression pact, they stealthily built up their army, their air force, their factories. How could I have known that they would be such liars and such sneaks? They pretended to be weak!"

"I'll beat them yet! Just give me a chance! Even now our armies in Russia are proceeding westward according to plan. We'll entice them all the way to Germany and then you'll see! I am still strong. I have most of Europe under my thumb. Think of my army and my air force! The Japanese will help us. They promised they would! Then we'll get them too. Please give me just a little more time!"

"No, Mephitis Hitler, this time you are coming back to stand trial for your failures!"

The spaceship sped smoothly and rapidly through the void for several days. Landing at a spaceport on the outskirts of an enormous city, Hitler and his captor took a rapid ground vehicle to a tall, gloomy structure at its center. They entered, proceeded down a long corridor to an elevator which took them down far below the surface. Stepping from the elevator, they walked toward a large chamber marked "Court of General Failures." They entered.

Court was in session. Three red-robed judges officiated from an elevated platform at one end of the dank, bare room which was entirely devoid of furniture, without even so much as a chair for the defendant. There was no audience.

The prisoner stood facing the court. Two of the judges appeared extremely bored: one yawned continuously—the other was frankly asleep.

An attendant handed a thick file labeled "Mars versus Mephitis" to the third judge who barely glanced at it.

"You are accused of failure to carry out your mission to conquer Earth, and thus of hampering our plans to subjugate the entire solar system. We won't waste too much time on the trial because the facts in this case speak for themselves. So we'll dispense with prosecution witnesses.

"There will be no need for a defense counsel because this court is absolutely honest and unprejudiced. It will impartially consider the interests of both sides.

"Prisoner at the bar, have you brought any witnesses to testify in your defense?"

"No, your Honor. I was brought here so unexpectedly that—"

"Well, we'll do without them. You won't need witnesses anyhow. Do you deny the truth of these charges?"

"Well, you see—"

"This court, after earnest and careful consideration of all the evidence and all the circumstances finds you guilty as charged. Have you anything to say before sentence is passed?"

"Please—"

"That will be all. We have given you too much time already. Years* are passing." He turned to his colleagues, both of whom were restlessly glancing at their watches. "Are we agreed?"

"Yes, yes," said the two in unison. "Let's get it over with. Whatever you say . . ."

"Then it is the sentence of this court that you be banished from Mars and from Earth for eternity. You will spend your days in solitude on a barren asteroid one mile in diameter. You will be forced to listen continuously to scratchy recordings of all your speeches on Earth.

"To show you that this court is not entirely without mercy, it will grant you a respite of one day for any year during which a single kind word has been said of you anywhere either on Mars or on Earth.* On such a day you may have the blessing of complete silence. The burden, both to find the evidence of the kind word and to prove it to this court, will, however, fall on you. Since you will be unable to leave the asteroid, either to hear what is being said on Earth or Mars, or to inform the court of it; and since no one will be able to communicate with you, we can't see how this will help you very much. That will, however, be your problem.

"TAKE HIM AWAY!"

THE END

* Obviously time on Mars is a different factor than on Earth. Several years passed during the trial, therefore a minute on Mars may be a month on Earth (in comparison) and so on.—Ed.

* When the time difference between the two worlds is taken into consideration, this is irony indeed!—Ed.